

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name:** Economic Development Administration (EDA), Department of Commerce
- **Federal Funding Opportunity Title:** National Technical Assistance: Research and Evaluation
- **Announcement Type:** Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) Announcement
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 11.312, Economic Development—Research and Evaluation
- **Dates:** Applications for funding under this program must be received by the EDA representative listed in section VII. of this competitive solicitation no later than August 15, 2006 at 5:00 p.m. EDT. Applications received after 5:00 p.m. EDT on August 15, 2006 will not be considered for funding. By September 15, 2006, EDA expects to notify the applicants selected for investment assistance. The selected applicants should expect to receive funding for their projects within thirty (30) days of EDA's notification of selection.
- **Application Submission:** Applications must be submitted to EDA Headquarters in Washington, D.C., as provided in section VII. of this competitive solicitation.
- **Federal Funding Opportunity Description:** Pursuant to its Research and Evaluation program, EDA is soliciting applications for a research project involving the development of a metric for the concept of regionalism. This research project also seeks to (i) evaluate the utility of EDA's economic development programs in encouraging regional economic development, (ii) assess the effects of EDA investment assistance, and (iii) identify measures to help EDA to assess how effective its investments are in fulfilling program priorities to increase productivity, stimulate innovation, and spur new business formation.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Federal Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The Economic Development Administration's (EDA) mission is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. Through its Research and Evaluation program, EDA works towards fulfilling its mission by funding research and technical assistance projects to promote competitiveness and innovation in urban and rural regions throughout the United States and its territories. By working in conjunction with its research partners, EDA will help States, local governments, and community-based organizations to achieve their highest economic potential.

B. Project Description: Comprehensive Study of Regionalism

EDA is soliciting applications to undertake research involving the development of a metric for regionalism. As described in detail below, this research project also seeks to (i) evaluate the utility of EDA's economic development programs in encouraging regional economic development, (ii) assess the effects of EDA investment assistance, and (iii) identify measures to help EDA to assess how effective its investments are in fulfilling program priorities to increase productivity, stimulate innovation, and spur new business formation. Applications must address each of these three (3) project components.

Recent studies of economic development, including several EDA-funded reports, stress the importance of a regional approach to successful economic development efforts and the importance of fostering innovation and supporting entrepreneurship as key elements in regional economic development. EDA appreciates the importance of the regional perspective and has implemented several strategies designed to foster regional economic development planning and implementation, innovation and entrepreneurship. EDA now wishes to develop credible measures of regional economic impact, innovation and entrepreneurship, and the efficacy of these efforts in fostering increased productivity, new business formation and economic growth.

The scope of work for this project consists of the following elements:

1. A report evaluating EDA's program initiatives on the development of a regional perspective. The report should be suitable for peer review and contain a review of the relevant literature, and a discussion of the methodology and data used in the evaluation;
2. A set of recommended measures that EDA can use to evaluate its investments and assess whether they promote regional economic development, innovation and entrepreneurship;
3. A set of recommendations on how to use the measures operationally to help EDA evaluate investment and program effectiveness; and

4. A presentation to senior EDA officials at the close of the study that outlines the methods in simple language and summarizes the report's conclusions in a manner suitable for dissemination to the public.

C. Program Authority

The authority for the Research and Evaluation program is section 207 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. § 3147), as amended (PWEDA), and 13 C.F.R. part 306, subpart A. Additional information is available at EDA's Internet website at www.eda.gov and in section VI. of this announcement.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

EDA may use funds appropriated under the Science, State, Justice, Commerce and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2006 (Pub. L. No. 109-108, 119 Stat. 2290 (2005)) for the Research and Evaluation program authorized by PWEDA. Funds up to \$200,000 are available, and shall remain available until expended, for funding awards pursuant to this competitive solicitation. This is the second FFO announcement published under this program during FY 2006. The first announcement under National Technical Assistance was published on June 16, 2006. EDA anticipates publishing at least one more FFO announcement under this program later this fiscal year.

B. Type of Funding Instrument

Awards under this competitive solicitation will be in the form of grants or cooperative agreements, with cooperative agreements being used where there is substantial collaboration between EDA's Research and Evaluation program staff and the recipient of an award. For example, a cooperative agreement will be used if there is substantial collaboration between EDA's Research and Evaluation program staff and the recipient in identifying effective measures for evaluating its investments.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants and Eligible Recipients

Pursuant to PWEDA, eligible applicants for and eligible recipients of EDA investment assistance include a District Organization; an Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; a State; a city or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; an institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; a public or private non-profit organization or association; a private individual; or a for-profit organization. *See* section 3 of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3122) and 13 C.F.R. § 300.3.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Share Requirement

Generally, the amount of the EDA grant may not exceed fifty (50) percent of the total cost of the project. Projects may receive an additional amount that shall not exceed thirty (30) percent, based on the relative needs of the region in which the project will be located, as determined by EDA. *See* section 204(a) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3144(a)) and 13 C.F.R. § 301.4(b)(1). Under this competitive solicitation, the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development (Assistant Secretary) has the discretion to establish a maximum EDA investment rate of up to one hundred (100) percent where the project (i) merits and is not otherwise feasible without an increase to the EDA investment rate; or (ii) will be of no or only incidental benefit to the recipient. *See* section 204(c)(3) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3144) and 13 C.F.R. § 301.4(b)(4).

While cash contributions are preferred, in-kind contributions, consisting of assumptions of debt or contributions of space, equipment and services, may satisfy the non-federal share requirement of the total project cost. *See* section 204(b) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3144). EDA will fairly evaluate all in-kind contributions, which must be eligible project costs and meet applicable federal cost principles and uniform administrative requirements. Funds from other federal financial assistance awards are considered matching share funds only if authorized by statute that allows such use, which may be determined by EDA's reasonable interpretation of the statute. *See* 13 C.F.R. § 300.3. The applicant must show that the matching share is committed to the project, available as needed and not conditioned or encumbered in any way that precludes its use consistent with the requirements of EDA investment assistance. *See* 13 C.F.R. § 301.5.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Paper copies of the Form ED-900A, "Application for Investment Assistance" (OMB Control No. 0610-0094), may be obtained from EDA's Internet website at www.eda.gov or by contacting the EDA representative listed in section VII. of this announcement.

B. Content and Form of Application Process

To apply for an award under this competitive solicitation, an eligible applicant must submit a completed Application for Investment Assistance (Form ED-900A) in accordance with the guidelines set forth below.

1. Application Format

Each Application for Investment Assistance must include:

- a. A completed Form ED-900A, including the program-specific component related to EDA's National Technical Assistance, Training, and Research and Evaluation investments;

- b. A description of how the researcher(s) intend(s) to carry out the scope of work (included in the narrative requested in Part I of the program-specific component, which narrative should not exceed ten (10) pages);
- c. A proposed budget and accompanying explanation, including a detailed explanation of the matching share (i.e., non-federal share) to be contributed by the applicant's regional/local partners (as requested in Part II of the program-specific component as Exhibit II.A.);
- d. Resumes/qualifications of key staff (which should not exceed two (2) pages per individual, with an additional two (2) pages allowed for a single summary description of all organizations or consultants named in the application); and
- e. A proposed schedule for completion of the project.

2. Submission Deadline

Applications for funding under this competitive solicitation must be received by the EDA representative listed in section VII.B. no later than August 15, 2006 at 5:00 p.m. EDT. Applications received after 5:00 p.m. EDT on August 15, 2006 will be considered non-responsive and will not be considered for funding. By September 15, 2006, EDA expects to notify the applicants selected for investment assistance.

C. Intergovernmental Review

Applications for funding under this competitive solicitation are not subject to the requirements of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

D. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants may submit applications by e-mail, hand-delivery or postal mail, as provided in section VII.B. of this announcement.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria and Selection Procedures

To apply for an award under this announcement, an eligible applicant must submit a completed application (Form ED-900A) to EDA during the timeframe specified and in the manner provided in sections IV.B. and VII.B. Applications that do not meet all items required or that exceed the page limitations specified in section IV.B. of this announcement will be considered non-responsive and will not be considered by the review panel. Applications that meet all the requirements will be evaluated by a review panel comprised of at least three (3) EDA staff members, all of whom will be full-time federal employees. The review panel will evaluate the applications and rate and rank them using the following criteria of approximate equal weight:

1. Conformance with EDA's statutory and regulatory requirements, including the extent to which the proposed project satisfies the award requirements set out below and as provided in 13 C.F.R. § 306.2:
 - a. Strengthens the capacity of local, State or national organizations and institutions to undertake and promote effective economic development programs targeted to regions of distress;
 - b. Benefits distressed regions; and
 - c. Demonstrates innovative approaches to stimulate economic development in distressed regions;
2. The degree to which an EDA investment will have strong organizational leadership, relevant project management experience and a significant commitment of human resources talent to ensure the project's successful execution (*see* 13 C.F.R. § 301.8(b));
3. The ability of the applicant to implement the proposed project successfully (*see* 13 C.F.R. § 301.8);
4. The feasibility of the budget presented; and
5. The cost to the Federal government.

B. Selection Factors

EDA expects to fund the highest ranking applications submitted under this competitive solicitation. The Assistant Secretary is the Selecting Official and will normally follow the recommendation of the review panel. However, the Assistant Secretary may not make any selection, or he may select an application out of rank order for the following reasons:

1. A determination that the application better meets the overall objectives of sections 2 and 207 of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. §§ 3121 and 3147);
2. The applicant's performance under previous awards; or
3. The availability of funding.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by postal mail that their applications were not recommended for funding.

The Selecting Official will issue the grant award (Form CD-450), which is the authorizing financial assistance award document. By signing the Form CD-450, the recipient agrees to comply with all award provisions. It is provided by postal mail to the appropriate business office of the recipient's organization and must be signed and returned without modification by the recipient within thirty (30) days of receipt.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements, published in the Federal Register on December 30, 2004 (69 FR 78389). This notice may be accessed by entering the Federal Register volume and page number provided in the previous sentence at the following Internet website:
<http://gpoaccess.gov/fr/retrieve.html>.

C. Reporting Requirements

All recipients are required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. All financial reports must be submitted in triplicate (one original and two copies) to the EDA Program Officer. Reports are due on a semi-annual schedule and must be submitted no later than thirty (30) days following the end of the six-month period(s) established in the award. Final reports are due ninety (90) days after the award completion. *See* 13 C.F.R. § 302.16.

D. EDA's Regulations

EDA's regulations codified at 13 C.F.R. Chapter III will govern an award made under this announcement.

VII. Agency Contacts

A. Additional Information

EDA's Internet website at www.eda.gov contains additional information on EDA and its programs. For additional information on the Research and Evaluation program, please contact William P. Kittredge at (202) 482-5442.

B. Address for Application Submissions

Applications submitted pursuant to this competitive solicitation may be:

1. E-mailed to William P. Kittredge at wkittredge@eda.doc.gov; or
2. Hand-delivered to William P. Kittredge, Senior Program Analyst, Economic Development Administration, Room 7009, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20230; or
3. Mailed to William P. Kittredge, Senior Program Analyst, Economic Development Administration, Room 7009, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20230.

Applicants are encouraged to submit applications by e-mail. Applicants are advised that, due to mail security measures, EDA's receipt of mail sent via the United States Postal Service may be substantially delayed or suspended in delivery. EDA will not accept applications submitted by facsimile.

VIII. Other Information and Requirements

EDA's currently effective regulations and PWEDA are available on its Internet website at www.eda.gov. Additional application and award terms are noted below.

- A. If an application is selected for funding, EDA has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with an award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at EDA's sole discretion.
- B. A project is expected to be completed in a timely manner consistent with the project description provided under section I. of this announcement.
- C. An award may include a requirement that the recipient conduct briefings and/or training workshops for individuals and organizations interested in the project results. Any required briefings/workshops will take place no later than one year after submission of the final report specified under section I. of this announcement. Locations and dates of the briefings/workshops are at EDA's sole discretion. Usually these consist of at least one briefing in Washington, D.C., with the other briefings/workshops held in conjunction with one or more of EDA's regional conferences.
- D. EDA is committed to a policy of non-discrimination in the administration of all its programs.